

An Open Letter from the Aurora Public Schools Board of Education:

Over the past several months the Board of Education has reviewed and analyzed budget proposals in order to meet anticipated state K-12 funding cuts: the potential \$20 million general fund reduction in 2010-11 and a projected \$16 million budget shortfall for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years.

In January, Board members published a list of proposed budget reductions and established avenues so we could receive staff, parent and community feedback. The Board has considered this feedback, including new ideas for reductions, and is prepared to issue sound directives to the Superintendent regarding time-sensitive proposals. We will continue to use staff, parent and community feedback to make decisions about further reductions over the next five months and subsequent three years.

Please rest assured that the Board will continue to gather feedback as it addresses these unprecedented budget challenges and makes decisions regarding additional reductions in order to meet the budget approval statutory deadline of July 1, 2010. At that time, the 2010-11 budget must be balanced. This will be accomplished with the approximately \$20 million in reduced expenditures and through the use of a portion of reserves.

Today, after careful consideration of feedback from APS staff, parents, the Special Budget Advisory Committee and the APS Leadership Team, the Board of Education directs the Superintendent as follows:

- Immediately implement a strategic hiring freeze. Only those positions identified critical by Division Heads will be filled for the remainder of this budget year. All other vacancies will remain unfilled indefinitely. This will result in an approximate budget reduction of \$400,000.
- By July 1, 2010, the following must also take place:
 - Reduce by 8% the number of non-school based administrative and professional technical employees. This will result in an approximate budget reduction of approximately \$1.1 million.
 - Reduce 2010-11 non-school budgets by 1% resulting in an approximate budget reduction of \$1.1 million.
 - Reduce 2010-11 school-based administrative support resulting in an approximate budget reduction of approximately \$1.5 million.
 - Maintain current, actual K-12 student teacher ratios into the 2010-11 school year resulting in an approximate budget reduction of \$2 million.
 - Reduce 2010-11 substitute teacher daily rates from \$93 to \$90 dollars, the daily super sub rate from \$143 to \$130 and the daily long term rate from \$153 to \$135. These rate reductions will result in an approximate budget reduction of \$250,000.
- Beginning in the 2010-11 school year:
 - Increase teacher instructional contact time at the high school level. High school teachers will have six separate classes over the two days of the alternating block schedule. Implement commensurate budget reductions at all middle schools,

- William Smith and T.H. Pickens through increased instructional contact time at those sites. This will result in a budget reduction of approximately \$2.6 million.
- Use a portion of the general fund's fund balance in 2010-11 in the amount of \$5 million.
 - Reduce the allocation of funds from the general fund to the capital reserve fund for one year only in the amount of \$1 million.
 - Assign all K-12 teachers regular supervision duties. This will result in a budget reduction of approximately \$750,000.

In addition, as a result of staff, parent and community feedback, the Board has decided to revise the proposed reductions in school staffing. Staff funds, called "TE," will be reduced by 20 TE at the high school level in 2010-11 instead of the originally proposed 40. This will allow high school staff members greater flexibility as they build master schedules with fewer resources. It is critically important to remember that the 20 TE savings is an intentional revised reduction in response to feedback. We will most likely require further reductions at the secondary level of an additional 40 TE over the next three years.

Many principals and their building teams have begun to develop 2010-11 plans and master schedules in anticipation of some of these changes. School staff members may now move forward with the above listed parameters as certainties, including additional contact time at secondary schools and teacher supervision duties at all schools.

The guidance we are providing to the Superintendent tonight will result in an approximate total of \$15.7 million in budget reductions. With staff, parent and community feedback, we are taking our first steps to meet our budget reduction responsibilities. Board members will continue to seek staff, parent and community input as we address the remaining difficult decisions to adopt a completely balanced budget later this school year.

We have a long way to go to reach the anticipated \$20 million in reductions for 2010-11 and beyond. Our country, our state, and our organization are experiencing unprecedented economic hardships that require unprecedented action by the APS family. To date we have met these challenges in a thoughtful, collaborative and responsible manner. As we move forward, we will continue regular and clear communication and provide on-going opportunities for input in the APS spirit of trust, teamwork and transparency.

Respectfully,

Aurora Public Schools Board of Education